



**Romani CRISS**

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ECOSOC 2011 High-Level Segment

**Romani CRISS –  
Organization in special consultative status**

One of the most critical issues in the field of education, in Romania, is the school segregation on ethnic grounds of Roma children. A 2011 research conducted by Romani CRISS and UNICEF<sup>1</sup> indicates that **school segregation influences significantly the school drop out rate, emphasizing that this rate is higher in the schools where the Roma children population is over 50 %.**

The issue of segregation was officially acknowledged by the Ministry of Education, as a result of the lobby undertaken by the NGOs, in 2007 a Ministerial Order was adopted, prohibiting school segregation of Roma children. The same 2011 research indicates that **76.6% of the interviewed Roma don't know that school segregation is prohibited by Ministerial Order.**

In spite of the official approach of the issue, there are still identified segregated schools, classes or even segregation cases at the level of special education. Roma students are placed in schools for children with special educational needs, with no medical justification. Most of the times, these Roma children weren't enrolled in kindergarten before going to school or don't speak Romanian, as their mother tongue.

As a result of the low effectiveness of the Ministerial Order, weak implementation and inexistent monitoring system, non-governmental organizations<sup>2</sup> have contributed with comments and proposals to the project for the education law. The law was adopted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 and includes no provisions prohibiting segregation.

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<sup>1</sup> Participation, school absenteeism and the experience of discrimination for Roma in Romania

<sup>2</sup> Romani CRISS, Roma Civic Alliance, UNICEF Romania

Not only that the efforts of the civil society weren't considered, but the obligations the Ministry of Education committed to in 2007 were not met until present. **The 1540/2007 Order included the provision of creating a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Order, for creating desegregation plans, mechanism which was not created until present, in spite of the lobby undertaken by NGOs.** Furthermore, according to the Order, **the annual report on the status of education issued by the Ministry of Education was supposed to include a chapter on the implementation of the Order. This obligation wasn't met either.**

Bearing in mind that international organizations, including the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination, condemn segregation, we strongly believe that having a provision prohibiting segregation within the most important normative act in the field of education is crucial for respecting the international human rights standards.

Therefore, we urge the Romanian Ministry of Education to comply with the obligations set by the already existent legislation in the field of combating segregation of Roma children. Namely, we urge the Romanian Ministry of Education to create a monitoring mechanism, in order to identify the education units practicing this form of discrimination, to work on desegregation plans and assure their implementation.

We call upon the Romanian Ministry of Education to consider the amendment of the Law no 1/2011 – law on the national education, by including a provision prohibiting school segregation of Roma children. This measure is crucial in assuring the effectiveness of the Governmental measures of combating school segregation.